

Quantities of Butter and Cheese forwarded to Grading-stores for grading.

Port.				Year 1917-18. Butter.	Year 1917-18. Cheese.	Year 1916-17. Butter.	Year 1916-17. Cheese.
				Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.
Auckland	..	..	..	258,216	156,373	271,822	139,101
Gisborne	..	..	..	5,155	..	5,163	..
New Plymouth	..	..	..	57,384	161,087	70,855	162,245
Wanganui	..	..	..	7,785	16,361	7,498	16,465
Patea	..	..	..	6,810	239,549	7,393	235,306
Wellington	..	..	..	75,042	277,174	43,227	255,906
Lyttelton	..	..	..	21,761	27,000	13,530	24,667
Timaru	..	..	..	500	..	43	..
Dunedin	..	..	..	15,076	43,572	10,999	32,681
Bluff	..	..	..	..	120,259	..	128,481
Totals	..	..	..	447,729	1,041,375	470,530	994,582

(NOTE.—The net weight of one box of butter may be taken as 56 lb. and one crate of cheese as 160 lb.)

CREAMERY BUTTER.

From the tables contained in this report it will be seen that there has been a decrease in the quantity of creamery butter graded for export for the year amounting to 22,801 cwt. as compared with the total amount received for the preceding year. This is mainly accounted for as the result of the movement to manufacture cheese instead of butter, the former being more profitable to the producers at the present market value of the two products. If this difference in value continues in favour of cheese a further reduction in the quantity of butter manufactured may be expected within the near future.

In the opinion of the dairy-produce graders at the leading ports the quality of butter made during the year has not been quite up to the standard of last year. There are several causes which have contributed to this falling-off in quality, amongst which may be mentioned the extension of the system of separating the cream on the farms, which has now spread widely to every dairying district in the Dominion.

It is to be regretted that many of the producers, either through a lack of knowledge or from sheer carelessness, allow their cream to deteriorate before it leaves the farm. It frequently occurs that the dairying utensils and appliances are not cleaned in an approved manner. Milking-sheds and general surroundings are kept in anything but good condition. The cream is not removed to a position where the atmosphere is reasonably pure; neither is it cooled for the purpose of its better preservation. Therefore it stands to reason that the butter made from cream which has been so unskilfully handled cannot be of good quality. All attempts by the buttermakers to overcome the ill flavour in butter of this kind are at the best only partly successful, and it often happens that their efforts in this direction completely fail. Hence we find that much low-grading butter reaches the stores for export, which could be easily avoided providing the producers would do their part in supplying only cream of good quality to the factories.

On the other hand, a large percentage of the butter manufactured during the year has been of high grade and in every way suitable to fill the demands of a first-class trade. Furthermore, there has been a distinct uniformity in the flavour, body, and texture of the best butter from those factories where the farmers are more keenly alive to the necessity of accepting their share of responsibility for the excellence of the finished product.

A word of warning, however, is necessary in connection with the overworking of butter at several of the large factories, where attempts are constantly being made to obtain the maximum yield by incorporating as much moisture as possible without exceeding the legal limit. This means the production of butter of a greasy and salvy nature, which every dairy company should be anxious to avoid, as the value of the product is thereby reduced.

WHEY BUTTER.

The yearly extension of the cheese industry has been attended with the production of a greater quantity of whey butter for some years past, and this comparatively new branch of the cheese industry is now bringing in a good revenue to those dairy companies which have installed the machinery required to recover the butter-fat remaining in the whey. The total quantity of this class of butter graded for the year was 16,335 cwt., or an increase of 28 per cent. on the quantity for the corresponding period of last year.

No general improvement in the flavour, body, and texture of this butter can be reported, and for this the manufacturers are alone responsible. It is true, however, that a portion of this product from a minority of the factories was found to be of good flavour and well made. These consignments, moreover, were quite suitable for table use, and would find a ready sale on any of the markets for butter at prices closely approximating and sold under the brand of "Creamery."